

The Decision of The Colored American in Favor of the Baptist Concern Based Upon Facts.

For several weeks past considerable discussion has been carried on by the friends of the various colored publishing houses and each has attempted to show the superiority of one over that of the others. While we are glad to see evidences of what promises to be a deep interest to be taken in this department of our churches—a work in which we ourselves are deeply interested and have had some experience, we are equally anxious that in a comparison, most honor to whom most honor is due should be accorded, and feel it our duty to proffer a few facts for consideration by fair-minded individuals. In the very outset, however, we must confess it has never been our good fortune to visit the Zion Publishing House and in our discussion we shall be guided by what we have actually seen on one hand, as against the claims of friends and quality and quantity of work executed on the other.

In defense of its house The Star of Zion quotes an utterance of Bishop Walters, which is exceedingly irrelevant if not immaterial viz. that the Zion House leads in both size and value. While we agree with The Christian Recorder that more is to be coveted in quality worth than quantity prominence, we might concede to the Zion House both size and value and the real question to our mind would still be unsettled. It is only a few months ago that we read in The Star that the deep ditches and dilapidated buildings that have been an eyesore to friends of the Publishing House so long are being filled in and removed and replaced by beautiful two story structures. When we think of this expression, of the quality and quantity of work executed, supported too by the information which, as a careful reader of The Star, we have received of the size of this plant, we cannot help ask if there are not several hundred acres of land with horses and cattle connected with the above named plant, which, while enhancing its financial value, increases its worth as a publishing house not in the least. If such is the case then we can see upon what grounds Bishop Walters could make the statement attributed to him.

The claim made by The Star as to the value of its plant if located in some city like Washington or Nashville is exceedingly ludicrous. Are we not left to believe by circumstances that, if located in either of the above places some one else would have been the proud possessor of their building? We are reminded of the farmer who, advised by a northern gentleman that his potatoes, if sold in New York, would bring twice the amount he received, remarked: "Yes; gol darn, and I guess if I had a bucket of water in hell I could get \$1 a drink." The Star is either ignorant of facts or has resorted to the lowest political methods when it declares that the Baptist House is aided by the whites. If it considers the aid given the Baptist denomination by the northern whites and indirect help to the Publishing House it is certainly mistaken. As a matter of fact this is its greatest drawback, since the acceptance on the part of the church of these gifts carries a moral obligation at least to use the literature of the American Baptist Publication Society (white.) Thus we have on one hand a house existing by a support purely optional while on the other a house of a denomination where the schools are forced by

bishop, presiding elder and pastor to use only its literature.

We do not wish to detract one iota from the success of the Zion House. They are certainly doing a grand work. Their plant consists of cylinder press two job presses, paper cutter, engine, stitcher, folder and a good supply of fairly good type. They give employment to about twenty-two fairly well paid employees. They do all kinds of printing from a newspaper to a 150 page pamphlet.

The Baptist House, though scarcely four years old gives work to more than forty well compensated employees, besides its apprentices, superintended by one of the best colored printers in the country at a salary of \$18 per week, has a telephone system throughout the building, well lighted by its own electrical plant and best of all has never been embarrassed on a pay day by an inability to pay every employee every cent due him. Their printing plant consists of two cylinders presses and two jobbers of the best make, engine, three stitchers, folder, steam cutter, complete bindery, etc. all encompassed in a fine three story building on one of the principal streets in the center of a city like Nashville, printing anything that can be printed. Can The Star honestly say the Zion Publishing House equals this? We think not. Though the writer remembers working on quarterlies ten years ago on which were stamped the imprint of the Zion Publishing House, it will be noticed we have made no effort to bring the existence of the two houses into play. The house—the Sunday School Union for which we then worked has long since been destroyed by fire of an exceedingly questionable origin and dropped out of the race. We might, of course, resort to The Stars manner of reasoning and assert that if the \$6 000 debt we are reliably informed Dr. Chappelle found over the building at Nashville (the reports of the ex-secretary about its being free from debt notwithstanding) were liquidated and the building situated in Washington, the A. M. E. would outstrip the others in both size and value. I am forced to say however, that after nearly twenty years existence during which time we have raised more than \$50 000 besides the profits from the sale of literature published by white houses, we have absolutely nothing to show. In conclusion we wish to say that being an A. M. E. we have nothing against the Baptist nor Zion house and what we have said is only said in interest of the truth. We earnestly hope that much good instead of the ill-feeling of which Dr. Johnson speaks will be the outcome of this discussion.

Yours for fairness,
IRA T. BRYANT.
City.

Prof. R. R. Wright in Town.

Prof. R. R. Wright, president of the Normal and Industrial School of College, Ga. is a visitor in this city. He read a most interesting paper before the Bethel Literary and Historical Association last Tuesday night and on Wednesday he met the Industrial Commission and submitted most valuable facts in regard to "Negro Farm Labor in Georgia." Prof. Wright has made a study of the economic and industrial questions which pertain to the race and no man in Georgia is better prepared to furnish the commission evidence than he is. The paper which he read before the Bethel Literary Society is such an interesting one that it will be printed in full in the next issue of The Colored American with a fine portrait of Prof. Wright.

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